

Homeplace Plantation
Hahnville
St. Charles Parish, La.

HABS No. LA-155

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Louisiana

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
CENTRAL UNIT -- ST. LOUIS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Richard Koch, District Officer
908 Queen & Crescent Bldg., New Orleans, La.

HOMEPLACE PLANTATION

Hahnville, St. Charles Parish, Louisiana.

Physical Data

Present owner: P. A. Keller

Present occupant and use: Plantation residence of P. A. Keller family.

Description (present condition)

Wall construction: Ground floor, brick, plastered; main floor, timber frame with mud filling (bousillage), plastered.

Size and form: 85'6" x 54'3", rectangular.

Number stories: Two and attic.

2-story porch: On all sides.

Exterior openings, windows: Shutters only (no windows) at ground floor. The only windows at main floor are recent, double hung at additions. Other openings are glazed doors. Attic windows double hung.

Exterior openings, doors: Glazed, double (French) doors at main floor.

Cornice: Wood lookouts projecting two feet.

Roof: Hipped, trussed, French West Indies type.

Roofing: Corrugated galvanized iron over original shingles.

Chimneys: 2, brick (3 others taken down).

Interior

Floors: Brick, dirt, and marble tile at ground floor - cypress at main floor.

Doors: 4-panel with transom.

Trim: Moulded, mitered.

Mantels: Wood with intricate reed and groove carving.

Stairways: Wood, outside, square spindles, round hardwood handrail.

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Plasterwork: No special.

Additions and alterations: Front stairs changed to straight run at middle of front; ceiling of main floor raised 3' about 1899. Bathrooms, kitchen, dining room added or extended onto porch. 2 dormers, 3 chimneys removed and remaining sash replaced. Garconniere removed to neighboring farm.

Outbuildings: Barn (demolished 1940), combination pigeon and carriage house.

Historical Data

Year of erection: About 1801, according to present owners.

Built for (first owner): Fortier.

Architect or designer: Unknown.

Built by: Unknown.

Original intended use: Plantation residence and outbuildings.

Notable events and occupants:

The house was originally built for the planter Fortier on a 10,000-acre tract of land facing the Mississippi River (a couple hundred feet away) and the Old Spanish Trail. Braddish Johnson acquired it before the Civil War.

At some time during the time of these first two owners, the dining room with a marble floor was located in the northeast corner of the basement; kitchen between the four live oaks; garconniere similar to the main house but smaller was off to the northwest and a corresponding one to balance. Carriage house and pigeonier, barn and an arc of 26 slave houses completed the plan to the rear.

D. Haydel owned it for a few years. P. A. Keller, grandfather of the present owners, acquired the property in 1881. In 1899, extensive alterations and repairs were made. The ceiling of the first floor was raised from 9' to 12', transoms placed over inside doors; outside stairs at north corner removed and middle flight to porch installed; brick paving laid at ground floor porch and in basement; new porch floor; doors changed; some fireplaces changed; kitchen moved; garconniere removed to adjoining farm where it now serves as framework for barn; cisterns changed; brick column caps repaired and

revised. Since then two dormers have been removed; dormer sash (2-20-light sash) replaced; 3 chimneys capped off in roof space; galvanized iron gutters and roofing replace wood gutters and cover shingles. Some timbers around porch floor, granite blocks at foot of steps, old boiler now on brick piers used as cistern, huge cast iron kettles at barn, were removed from an old sugar mill on the property. Two bathrooms and dining room bay (all extending onto porch) were added. Wood grilles now at ground floor porch were removed from passage to ground floor dining room. Matched and beaded wainscot in south corner room and the kitchen (not now used as such) attached to rear of building, are not very old.

Of the old planting, only the live oaks and magnolias remain. The avenue of pecan trees are about 50 years old.

Records previous to 1855 were burned with the courthouse at Hahnville.

Reference: P. A. Keller, present owner.

Prepared from the field notes obtained in the interviews with the Keller family in February 1940 (when the HABS field party measured Homeplace)

By F. Ray Leimkuehler September 1940.
F. Ray Leimkuehler

Approved:

Richard Koch Date Oct 10, 1940
Richard Koch - District Officer